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22nd. July 1783. By Desire of the Committee of American Merchants.  
EDWD. PAYNE.

[*Endorsement.*]

Observations  
on the Trade of North America  
by the Committee of American  
Merchants.

2. *George Rogers Clark to Genet, 1794.*

THE following letter of General George Rogers Clark to Genet, the minister of the French Republic, recently came into the possession of Mr. Stan. V. Henkels of Philadelphia, and it is through his kindness that we are enabled to offer it to the readers of the REVIEW. Little explanation of the letter is necessary beyond referring it to its proper place in the collection of the correspondence of Clark and Genet concerning the proposed French expedition against Louisiana in 1793-1794, which was published in the report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission for 1896.<sup>1</sup> At the time when this letter was written Clark had for several months been active, under a commission from Genet, in organizing the expedition; Michaux, an agent of Genet, who had spent the autumn in Kentucky engaged with Clark in intrigues and preparations, had returned to Philadelphia, ostensibly for funds; Lachaise, another agent, who had been busy in Kentucky since the preceding December,<sup>2</sup> was now taking his departure. Genet, meanwhile, had been recalled by his government, Fauchet, his successor, had revoked all commissions and ordered the expedition stopped,<sup>3</sup> and Washington had issued his proclamation against it.<sup>4</sup> Clark had learned of Fauchet's proclamation, but the news of the President's proclamation probably had not reached him.

A peculiarity of this letter as written by Clark is that every line

<sup>1</sup> American Historical Association *Report*, 1896, I. 930-1107. The commission's report for 1897 (*Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1897, pp. 569-679) included the Mangourit correspondence, relating primarily to an allied expedition to be conducted by General Elijah Clark against Florida, but bearing also upon the Louisiana project; and the report for 1903 (*Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1903, II.) comprised the correspondence of the French ministers in the United States, 1791-1797, much of which is concerned with the Louisiana part of the scheme. Some related documents were published in the issues of this journal for April, 1897, and April, 1898 (II. 474-505, and III. 490-516). Attention may also be called to Professor Frederick J. Turner's article on the initial stages of the Genet episode: "The Origin of Genet's projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas", published in the issue of the REVIEW for July, 1898 (III. 650-671).

<sup>2</sup> See *AM. HIST. REV.*, III. 512.

<sup>3</sup> March 6, 1794. *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1897, p. 629. See also *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1903, II. 306.

<sup>4</sup> March 24, 1794. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, I. 157.

(with two or three exceptions) begins with a capital. This form has been preserved in the printed text.

E. C. B.

Geo R Clark  
Citizen Genet

LOUISVILLE Aprill the 28th 1794

Citizen Leshais<sup>5</sup> will hand you this and will also inform You of the Situation of affairs in this Country. on the Receipt of your Letter<sup>6</sup> by Citiz Michaux<sup>7</sup> we agreed to Set about the intended Buisness on the Mississipi (In the Compition of it there was no Doubt) amediatly. As no Doubt you have Learnd from him, it was found Nessecerry for him to go to Philedelphia to see you on Money Matters and return as soon as possible.<sup>8</sup> in the Meane time I was to Set eavery wheele in motion in This Quarter which hath been so Completely Done By Emecerrys etc in Louisana that the appearance of a Small forcè in that Country wold cause a Genl. revolt And upwards of two thousand men have been waiting With impatiance to penetrate into that Country<sup>9</sup> Declare them selves Citizens of France and Give freedom To their neibours on the Mississipi, and we have Actually had a Small Camp Fortifyd within fifty Miles of the Enemys Lines and four hundred advance of This place, for four months past. add to this the univesal Applause of the people throughout those back Countrys in Favour of the Enterprise, the arristocratical party Excepted. the Democratick Society of Kentucky<sup>10</sup> have made Some advances in amunition and Given all the encouragement In their power, and the whole have been impatiently Expecting Mr Michaux with Supplies of money. But since that agent left this I have receivd but one Letter

<sup>5</sup> Auguste Lachaise, who went to Kentucky in December, 1793, as agent for Genet. His own statement of his connection with this affair is found in *AM. HIST. REV.*, III. 511-515. See also *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 1002, 1078, 1088, 1102; Gayarré, *Louisiana under Spanish Domination*, p. 341; Martin, *Louisiana*, II. 223; and *Am. State Papers, For. Rel.*, I. 455.

<sup>6</sup> The letter, dated July 12, 1793, is in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 986. Cf. p. 1007.

<sup>7</sup> André Michaux, a botanist, who was Genet's principal agent in Kentucky. His activities are elucidated by numerous documents in the Clark-Genet correspondence (*Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, vol. I.). See also *AM. HIST. REV.*, III. 666, and Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of Biography*. The Journal of Michaux is printed in the *Proceedings* of the American Philosophical Society for 1889.

<sup>8</sup> See *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 1009, 1010, 1012, 1013, 1016, 1024.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the statement of Lachaise, in *AM. HIST. REV.*, III. 513.

<sup>10</sup> An account of the activities of the Democratic Societies at the time is given in a letter of the French commissioners, Fauchet, La Forest, and Petry, December 5, 1794, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1903, II. 500-502. There is a chapter on Democratic Societies in G. D. Luetscher, *Early Political Machinery of the United States*. See the farewell address of Lachaise to the Democratic Society of Lexington, *Am. State Papers, Misc.*, I. 931; cf. *AM. HIST. REV.*, III. 513.

From him Dated in December<sup>11</sup> last but under the Expectation of his arival buisness have gone on rapidly and the Intrest of the republick Continually in our view untill the Declaration of your Successor Mr Fauchet<sup>12</sup> of the 6th of March Made its appearance which hath Dampt the whole and inflamd The minds of a great number of people When the report of the failaur Shold reach the inhabitants Of the Mississipi they will be miserable. Great number Of Friends Doubt the authenticity of this Declaration But if it is real, I hope Sir you will use eavry means In your power to have the expences we have been at Refunded. though it is not Considerable it is Suffisiant to Ruin me, and hurt many others you are sensible that So extensive a Corispondance that I must have had Throughout those extencive western Countrys as to Bring over the whole of them to the intrest of the Proposed plan must have been attended with expence. Could the republick procecute the war in other quarters Of the world on the same terms that I have Done it For them on the Mississipi, by paper only, for six Months past they might as I hope they Do Laugh at Theirs enemys. From the most moderate Calculation the Spanards have expended on the Mississipi, within these last Six months four Million of Dollars,<sup>13</sup> when But a few thousands was Spent by us in keeping them in Such Continual Dread and now with a small Suply Of money and orders to persue the plan all their preparations would prove fruitless. I wright to you Sir as you was at that time At the head of this buisness and hope that you Will use your influence in Geting things so aranged As to undemnyfy us.<sup>14</sup> the Great intrest that France have In this Country I think is worth their attention. the People in General yet Look up to them for something To be Done as they are out of all hopes of Congress eaven Favouring them in their negociations with Spaine respecting The Mississipi.<sup>15</sup>

I refer you to Genl Lashaise for information

<sup>11</sup> The letter, dated Philadelphia, December 27, 1793, is in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 1024.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Antoine Joseph Fauchet. See the account of his career in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1903, II. 288. What purports to be a copy of his proclamation of March 6, 1794, is in the Mangourit correspondence (*Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1897, p. 629). Mangourit, in Charleston, also doubted or affected to doubt the authenticity of Fauchet's declaration. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 645-647, 659-661.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the statement of Lachaise, *Am. Hist. Rev.*, III. 514.

<sup>14</sup> Concerning Clark's claims against the French government and his efforts to collect upon them, see *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 1067-1077, 1084-1089, 1095-1098, 1101.

<sup>15</sup> See the address of the Democratic Society of Kentucky, December 13, 1793, and the remonstrance of the citizens of Kentucky to the President and Congress, in *Am. State Papers, Misc.*, I. 929-931; also the Lexington resolutions, June 23, 1794, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1896, I. 1056.

On eavey Subject that you may wish to Inquire about as  
He hath Takeing paines to Inform himself

I am Sir with much a Steem

*Yours etc*

G. R. CLARK.

3. *Despatch from the British Consul at Charleston to Lord  
John Russell, 1860.*

THE following despatch from Robert Bunch, British consul at Charleston, to Lord John Russell, foreign secretary, describing a conversation with R. B. Rhett, is drawn from the Public Record Office, "Foreign Office, America", series II., volume 745. The interest of the letter lies not so much in the exposition of Rhett's views, which are well known, but rather in the fact that it reveals an effort to test the attitude of the British government toward a Southern confederacy before such a confederacy had been formed, and in the further fact that Rhett not only indicates the course which South Carolina would pursue but endeavors to forecast the policy of the Southern confederacy in several important particulars as well as to predict the action of the federal government in the event of secession.

Rhett could assume to speak for South Carolina with some authority. He had for some time been prominent in the councils of the state, and he took an important part in the convention which assembled on December 17, and which on December 20 passed the ordinance of secession. In the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States, as chairman of the committee on foreign relations, he had opportunity to further the commercial policy which, in the interview with Bunch, he sets forth as the probable policy of the confederacy. His notion, however, of the easy acquiescence of European nations in the system of slavery proved to be erroneous, and his forecast of the position which the Confederate government would take in regard to the reopening of the African slave-trade was likewise incorrect, for the Confederate constitution prohibited the traffic.

The writer of this despatch, Robert Bunch, had been consul at Charleston since July 5, 1853, having been stationed (since 1848) first in New York and afterward in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> He sustained cordial relations with Southern statesmen, but his despatches of 1860 to his secretary of state, examined in London by the managing editor, do not bear out the opinion held at Washington that he was partial to slavery and the Southern cause. The negotiations conducted by

<sup>1</sup> Bunch's official career is chronicled in the *Foreign Office List* for 1879 and preceding issues.